

S T A T E   S E N A T O R

# David J. Cappiello



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[www.SenatorCappiello.cga.ct.gov](http://www.SenatorCappiello.cga.ct.gov)

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## Autism Spectrum Disorders

Autism affects over 20,000 Connecticut residents and is now one of the fastest growing developmental disorders in the nation according to the Centers for Disease Control. The Connecticut General Assembly is working to assist those Connecticut citizens with several new laws passed this year. With the new health insurance coverage and the coming educational improvements, we will create the best environment for these children to reach their full potential.

### Health Insurance for Autism Therapies:

- Beginning on January 1, 2009, health insurance policies will provide coverage for physical, speech and occupational therapy services if the policies cover these same services for other conditions.

### Education for Students with Autism and Developmental Disorders

- The Commissioners of Education and Developmental Services along with the Chancellor of the CT State University system will create curriculum and teaching practices for children with autism and developmental disabilities.

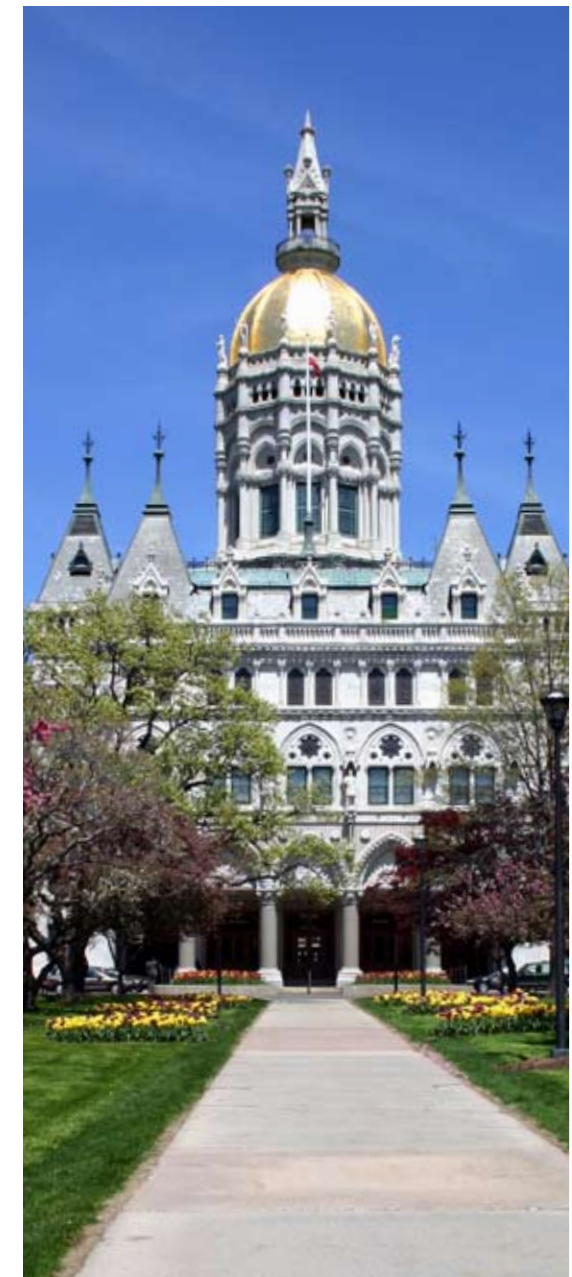


## Seniors

This year we passed several measures to ensure that our seniors are well cared for in the best environment. By making the Medicaid system for seniors more flexible, we recognize the desire of many seniors to stay in their homes as long as possible and when they need additional services, in a more home-like environment.

- The federal “Money Follows the Person” program encourages states to allow Medicaid-eligible nursing home residents to transition into community based homecare without losing their assistance. Last year, Connecticut allowed 700 residents to take part. This session, I co-sponsored legislation to increase that number to 5000.
- The Department of Social Services will develop a pilot program of 10 small nursing homes that will be more of a home-like setting rather than an institution for those who require that level of care.

- Beginning January 1, 2009, Medicaid clients will be provided with a full range of hospice services allowing the client more choice in their end of life care.



## 2008 Legislative Report

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# STATE SENATOR David J. Cappiello

*Dear Neighbor,*

*The end of the 2008 session of the Connecticut General Assembly marks my final year serving in the Connecticut state legislature. For the last ten years the people of Danbury, New Fairfield, Bethel, and Sherman have given me the opportunity to represent them in the State Senate. It has been a true honor; one that I do not take lightly and will never forget.*

*I've always looked to you, the people back home, for guidance and support. Together, we have been able to accomplish many important things: from preserving open space and the environment, to improving health care and public safety.*

*Please take a few moments to read about some of the important issues that were acted upon or considered this year. You can also visit my State Senate website at [www.SenatorCappiello.cga.ct.gov](http://www.SenatorCappiello.cga.ct.gov) for updates on events taking place at the State Capitol.*

*If you have any specific questions regarding these issues or any issue concerning state government please feel free to call my office at 1-800-842-1421, email me at [David.Cappiello@cga.ct.gov](mailto:David.Cappiello@cga.ct.gov) or write to me at: Senator David Cappiello, Legislative Office Building, Room 3400, Hartford, CT 06106.*

*Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for allowing me to serve you all these years.*

*Sincerely,*

*David*

David Cappiello



## Gasoline Tax

Connecticut currently has the unfortunate distinction of having among the highest gas prices in the nation, due mostly to Connecticut motorists paying the highest gas taxes in the U.S.

Connecticut actually has TWO gas taxes: a 25 cent per gallon tax at the pump, and another tax called the Gross Receipts Tax. This “hidden” tax is imposed on wholesalers as a percentage of the price of gasoline, and is passed along to consumers. Currently, the tax is 7% of the wholesale price of gas, but the tax was scheduled to rise to 7.5% on July 1st.

When the initial tax increases were enacted, the price of wholesale gasoline was \$1.50 per gallon, adding 9 cents at the pump. But, because the tax is a percentage of the price rather than a set amount, today's record high prices increased the tax to over 25 cents per gallon! The scheduled increase would have added another 5 cents to the price of gas.

The Gross Receipts revenues were meant to be dedicated to the Transportation Fund to pay for roads, bridges, and rail improvements. Because of the dramatic increase in gas prices the state is receiving a windfall. In fact, nearly 60% of the Gross Receipts Tax now goes into the General Fund and is not used to support transportation initiatives as originally intended. In essence, the state is receiving a bonus of over \$200 million paid for by cash-strapped Connecticut motorists.

I was the first member of the General Assembly to propose legislation to stop this tax increase, and I'm happy to report that the legislature took my lead and voted in Special Session to prevent the tax increase. Unfortunately, the majority Democrats did not adopt the portions of my proposal that would have frozen the tax rate and capped the price at which wholesalers are subjected to the tax to save drivers additional money.



*Senator Cappiello holds a press conference on June 11th, regarding his Gross Receipts Tax proposal (gas tax), along with State Representatives Tony D'Amelio (left) and Selim Noujaim (center).*



## Ethics Reform

For the last four years, I have sponsored legislation to create tougher ethical standards for public officials and employees. It has always been my belief that if an elected official or public employee is using their position to commit a crime, they should not receive taxpayer funded retirement benefits.

The legislation passed during the Special Session encompassed a number of reform initiatives that have been discussed in recent months. It includes:

- Pension revocation for elected officials and state and municipal employees upon conviction of a corruption related crime
- Making the failure to report a bribe a Class A misdemeanor
- Preventing a public official's chief of staff from soliciting campaign contributions from staff members
- Requiring mandatory ethics training for newly elected officials and “refresher” courses for incumbents every four years



## Budget

This year, the decision by leaders in the House and Senate to “do-nothing” means a budget deficit for '08 (nearly \$100 million) and a projected deficit for '09. It means no money for private providers, nursing homes or early reading programs. This “do-nothing” budget was, by far, the biggest disappointment of the 2008 session.

As ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, I, along with my Republican colleagues, supported opening up the budget to balance it, provide relief to Connecticut taxpayers, and fund important services. Our “Do Something” budget would have:

- Cut gas taxes and prevented a scheduled gas tax increase
- Phased out the Business Entity Tax and the Estate Tax “cliff”
- Provided additional funds for nursing homes, non-profit service providers, and Town roads
- Re-established the Early Reading Success Program